

To: WPIC

From: Nancy Zalutsky

Date: December 9, 2019

Re: Response to DNRC Survey

1. What about geocodes do you think WPIC should know?

Geocodes are a useful way to track water rights appurtenant to a single residential lot because those lots are created by survey rather than geography. Using aliquot parts to describe small (<10 acres) residential lots creates a lot of overlap of places of use. Strict adherence to using geocodes to assign ownership of stock and irrigation water rights does not work because the place of use of a water right is bound by the physical attributes of the land while geocodes were assigned to parcels created by surveys. A geocode review can serve as the beginning of an inquiry into the ownership of a water right, but it should not be the only piece of evidence used to make the determination

2. Do you have any suggestions to improve geocoding and the water right ownership update process?

I wrote an op-ed piece about changing the process in 2016. I submitted it to WPIC for the December 11th meeting. https://mtstandard.com/news/opinion/guest/five-steps-to-streamline-water-rights-transfer/article_c8bbd377-66e8-5825-8424-47cb23607c4d.html

3. Once water rights have had their geocodes validated, is this process easier to locate all water rights pertinent to the property?

No. I continue to use a map-based approach where I compare the POU, owner of record and actual use to locate water rights.

4. Have you found entering a geocode to search for water rights on a property within the DNRC water rights query system efficient? Could the water right query system be more user-friendly?

I don't use the DNRC water rights query system. I rely on B3 Insight, an interactive map application, to identify water rights.

5. Do you feel the DNRC water right records are more up-to-date and accurate regarding legal descriptions, ownerships and geocodes?

More up to date than what? No comment.

6. If there was one thing that could make ownership updates run smoother, what would you recommend?

Require them as part of the deed recording process.

7. Do you feel you need additional training in how to find water rights by geocode, owner, GWIC, etc.?

No.